

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DLOS-07 COA-02 CG-00 DOTE-00 CEQ-02 COME-00

EB-11 EPA-04 NSF-04 SCI-06 FEA-02 AGR-20 FMC-04 INT-08

JUSE-00 OMB-01 DRC-01 NEA-14 /200 W

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R 171543Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4185

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION NATO

USDOCOSOUTH

/USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAFE

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EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU, NATO

SUBJECT: GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER AEGEAN

REF: STATE 097455

SUMMARY: TURKS ARE TAKING POSTURE OF COOL TOUGHNESS ON
AEGEAN ISSUE. BELIEVE US AND NATO EFFORTS AT MOMENT
CAN BEST BE CONCENTRATED ON IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
PARTIES AND SEEKING WAY AVOID POSSIBLE NAVAL EXERCISE
CONFRONTATION IN AEGEAN JUNE 2. END SUMMARY

1. IN MAY 17 CONVERSATION WITH ISMAIL SOYSAL, DIRECTOR GENERAL
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, MFA, CHARGE EMPHASIZED US ATTACHES HIGHEST
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IMPORTANCE TO GREEK-TURKISH FRIENDSHIP AND EXPRESSED STRONG

HOPE EACH SIDE WILL WORK RESOLVE AEGEAN DISPUTE PEACEFULLY
AND DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE AVOID HEIGHTENING PUBLIC EMOTIONS
THIS ISSUE. HE RESONDED TO SOYSAL'S EARLIER REMARK IN

CONVERSATION ABOUT IMPORTANCE TURKEY ATTACHES TO NATO
(SEPTTEL) AND EMPHASIZED US TOO PUTS GREATEST IMPORTANCE
ON ALLIANCE AND COOPERATION AMONG ITS MEMBERS. HENCE, ITS
CONCERN OVER AEGEAN DISPUTE.

2. SOYSAL REPLIED THAT GREEKS MAKE IT HARD TO COOPERATE.
PRESIDENT KORUTURK IN HIS RECENT IZMIR SPEECH AVOIDED
PROVOCATIVE REMARKS DESPITE THE VERY NATURE
OF THE OCCASION (TRADITIONAL TURKISH COMMEMORATION OF THE
FIRING OF THE FIRST BULLET BY TURKS IN 1922 INDEPENDENCE WAR).
BUT GREEK PRESS HAD REPLIED WITH BARRAGE OF INSULTS. (HE
QUOTED FROM ELENIKOS VORRAS AND ESTIA.) AND
GREEK PRESS IS CLOSELY CONTROLLED THESE DAYS. NEVERTHELESS,
THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY IT COOL. HE WELCOMED US
VIEW PARA 1 ABOVE AND HOPED WE WERE SAYING SAME THING TO
ATHENS.

3. IN GENERAL DISCUSSION OF AEGEAN SITUATION WHICH FOLLOWED,
SOYSAL SAID THAT HE HAD PLANNED GO TO ATHENS MAY 12 FOR
DISCUSSIONS WITH OPPOSITE NUMBER THERE UNDER LONG-STANDING
"GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" FOR PERIODIC MEETINGS TWO FOREIGN
MINISTRIES' POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIRECTORS (SEE USNATO
2712, PARA 5), BUT HIS MINISTER HAD DIRECTED HIM TO WAIT
UNTIL NEXT MONTH "IN HOPE CLIMATE FOR DISCUSSIONS WOULD
IMPROVE". IN ANY EVENT, TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD HAVE CHANCE
DISCUSS AEGEAN AT NATO MINISTERIAL.

4. IN RESPONSE CHARGE'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER
POSSIBLE HEIGHTENED TENSIONS JUNE 2 WHEN TURKS PLANNING
REPEAT OF LAST MARCH FIRING EXERCISE IN AEGEAN EN ROUTE TO
NATO "GOOD FRIENDSHIP", SOYSAL SAID HE WOULD REVIEW
EXERCISE PLANS CAREFULLY. HE ADDED SOMEWHAT GRUMPILY THAT,
AS HE RECALLED, NATO FORCES INCLUDING US, HAD WITHDRAWN
FROM EARLIER EXERCISE AND THAT GOT RESENTED THEIR DOING SO.

5. CHARGE REPLIED THAT, HAVING ACCEPTED LEGITIMACY OF US AND
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NATO INTEREST IN PRESERVING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ALLIES GREECE
AND TURKEY, HE DIDN'T SEE HOW SOYSAL COULD BLAME NATO
COUNTRIES FOR NOT WANTING TO BE INVOLVED IN ANYTHING WHICH
COULD ADD TO TENSIONS. SOYSAL'S ONLY REPLY WAS "LET'S HOPE
IT CAN BE WORKED OUT." (IN LATER DISCUSSION WITH ERCUMENT
YAVUZALP, DIRECTOR GENERAL INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS,
MFA, ON SAME SUBJECT, YAVUZALP SAID "PLEASE TRY TO GET
OR GET NATO TO GET THE GREEKS TO ISSUE THE NOTAM. BUT,

PLEASE, NO PRESSURE ON US. OUR MILITARY WON'T TAKE IT.")

6. POSTURE OF TOUGH COOLNESS ON AEGEAN ISSUE SEEMS TO BE ONE IN WHICH TURKS CURRENTLY WISH CAST THEMSELVES. THIS REFLECTED ALSO IN MAY 16 CONVERSATION WITH MFA CYPRUS-GREECE DIRECTOR BARUTCU IN WHICH EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT US WAS STRONGLY INTERESTED IN CONTINUATION OF TURKISH-GREEK FRIENDSHIP AND ASKED WHAT PROSPECTS THERE WERE FOR TURKISH-GREEK BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS. BARUTCU REPLIED THAT NATO MINISTERIAL AT OTTAWA WOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS, ADDING WITH WRY CHUCKLE, "THAT MAY BE OUR LAST TALK." ASKED FOR EXPLANATION, HE SAID THAT TURKISH OIL EXPLORATION WOULD BEGIN SHORTLY AFTER OTTAWA MEETING. HE SHOWED NO INTEREST WHEN ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF BILATERAL CONTACTS DURING NATO LOS MEETING OR DURING CARACAS LOS CONFERENCE.

7. COMMENT: AS SEEN FROM HERE TURKISH-GREEK DISPUTE OVER AEGEAN REMAINS HOT BUT NOT YET QUITE AT BOILING POINT. BUT GOVERNMENTS STILL IN CONTROL OF THEIR ACTIONS, BUT DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THEM SEEMS TO BE VIRTUALLY NIL. BELIEVE IMPROVEMENT THIS COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE PRIMARY FOCUS OF US AND NATO EFFORTS NOW WITH SPECIFIC ATTENTION ALSO BEING GIVEN TO HELPING ATHENS AND ANKARA FIND A WAY OUT OF A POSSIBLE JUNE 2 CONFRONTATION IN THE AEGEAN.
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